

got a private system of insurance. We've got private hospitals, we've got private doctors. This system is a private system. What government takeover is there?

She keeps talking about a government bureaucrat getting between you and your doctor. What we have now is an insurance bureaucrat between us and our health providers. What we do is remove that. And if you want to repeal this bill, make my day. Try to repeal it.

Repeal the fact that small businesses are going to get tax credits right away. Repeal the fact that our children, who have preexisting conditions, will be able to be insured right away. Repeal the fact that we won't have any more preexisting conditions to prevent health insurance.

Make my day.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

#### MAJOR CHARLES R. SOLTES, JR., O.D. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BLIND REHABILITA- TION CENTER

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4360) to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation center in Long Beach, California, as the "Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4360

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VET- ERANS AFFAIRS BLIND REHABILITA- TION CENTER, LONG BEACH, CALI- FORNIA.

The Department of Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation center in Long Beach, California, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center". Any reference to such blind rehabilitation center in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the "Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4360.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to offer my support for H.R. 4360, a bill to name the VA Blind Rehabilitation Center in Long Beach, California, after the distinguished Iraq veteran Charles R. Soltes.

Mr. Soltes valiantly served his country in the United States Army as a major in the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion in Mosul, Iraq. He died on October 13, 2004, from wounds sustained in a blast conducting a combat patrol in Mosul. He was only 36 years old.

Major Soltes was a graduate of the New England College of Optometry and later completed his residency at Brooke Army Medical Center that focused on ocular trauma, acute eye conditions, medical contact lens applications, and glaucoma care. At West Point, he served as director of the optometry residency program. In 1998, Major Soltes became clinical director of the Irvin Vision Institute, a refractive surgery specialty center where he served until his voluntary deployment in Iraq. He was the first military optometrist to be killed in action while serving as a public health officer in Iraq.

He leaves behind a wife and three young children. Also an optometrist, Major Soltes' wife, Dr. Sally Houngh Dang, currently treats blinded veterans as a way to honor her husband.

Naming a VA facility after this hero and a strong veterans advocate is a proper honor for an honorable soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice for his Nation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4360, a bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center in Long Beach, California, as the Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center.

Naming the future blind rehabilitation center currently in its final stages of construction in Long Beach, California, after Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., is an appropriate expression of our support for our blind veterans.

In 2004 while deployed in Iraq, Major Soltes was serving in the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion in the U.S. Army when the vehicle he was traveling in was struck by an improvised explosive device, costing him his life.

He was the first Army optometrist to be killed in action while on Active Duty, but the legacy Major Soltes leaves behind remains strong with the veteran community, particularly among our blinded veterans. The VA

estimates that approximately 157,000 veterans in the United States are legally blind, and over 1 million additional veterans are suffering from debilitating low vision.

Approximately 60 percent of veterans with known combat-related traumatic brain injury and 30 percent with non-combat TBI report visual symptoms. As eye injuries continue to plague our servicemembers overseas, these numbers will continue to rise. And the work of optometrists like Major Soltes will become increasingly important.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest condolences and heartfelt appreciation to Major Soltes' family for their sacrifice. It's my sincerest wish that through the facility, the service and sacrifice of Major Soltes will not be forgotten, and his dedication to country and mankind will live on in the increased health and well-being of our Nation's blinded veterans.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) as much time as he might consume.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in honor of an American patriot for his service and his sacrifice to our country, Major Charles Robert Soltes of Irvine, California, the son of Colonel Soltes, who is now retired. Major Soltes had a distinguished career in the United States Army as well as in the city of Irvine. I might add, where he practiced medicine. It was in Irvine where he entered into private practice as an optometrist and set down his roots to raise a family.

Dr. Soltes subsequently joined the Army Reserve and was deployed to Iraq in 2004. He worked tirelessly as a public health officer in the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion building and upgrading hospitals for the Iraqi people.

On his way back from a hospital visit, his convoy was attacked by an improvised explosive device, and Major Soltes was killed on October 13, 2004. He was the first Army optometrist to be killed in action while on Active Duty. As such, it seems fitting that we honor him and his family by naming a soon-to-be-completed Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation center in Long Beach, California, at the veterans hospital there, which is in my congressional district.

Once this facility is completed, the blind rehabilitation center, it will work to deliver the same compassion and care that Dr. Soltes dedicated his entire career and gave his life for. This new 24-bed inpatient-outpatient facility, which is expected to be completed this year, will be the first purpose-built blind rehabilitation center in the national Veterans Administration, and as I say, it's located in my district, for which I have great pride.

Dr. Soltes was a graduate of New England College of Optometry. He entered the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps in 1994 and treated members of the military here in the United States as well as abroad. He was well liked and respected by his colleagues. One of